

Message Text

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ORIGIN SAB-02

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DRAFTED BY S/AB:DLAZAR
APPROVED BY ARA/PAN:EJNADEAU
-----021905Z 097023 /50
O 021822Z MAY 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY PANAMA IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PN

SUBJECT:JACK ANDERSON'S COLUMN, MONDAY, MAY 2

1. ANDERSON'S COLUMN, AS ANTICIPATED, STARTS OFF WITH
REVIEW OF STEPS BEING TAKEN ON NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS
WITH CUBA, THEN SWITCHES TO PANAMA.

2. PANAMA MATERIAL IS AS FOLLOWS: BEGIN QUOTE. HOWEVER,
FEDERAL INVESTIGATORS HAVE RECEIVED DISTURBING NEW
ALLEGATIONS ABOUT CUBA THAT COULD QUICKLY CHILL THE RECENT
THAW IN THE DIPLOMATIC CLIMATE.

THE ALLEGATIONS COME FROM AN INFORMANT INSIDE PANAMA,
WHERE TOP GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN TRAFFICKING IN
INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS FOR YEARS. THE SHADOWY UNDERWORLD
INFORMANT CHARGES THAT LATIN AMERICAN NARCOTICS FLOWING
INTO THE UNITED STATES ARE ACTUALLY TRANSSHIPPED THROUGH
CUBA.

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CONGRESSIONAL INVESTIGATORS, WE PREVIOUSLY REPORTED, HAVE
ESTABLISHED THAT THE BROTHER OF PANAMANIAN DICTATOR OMAR
TORRIJOS, MOISES, HAS BEEN FUNNELING HEROIN INTO THE
UNITED STATES. BUT THE STATE DEPARTMENT, FEARFUL OF
UPSETTING THE DELICATE NEGOTIATIONS OVER THE PANAMA CANAL,
HAS LOOKED THE OTHER WAY.

THE INFORMANT ALSO MAINTAINS THAT AN AUTOMOBILE DEALERSHIP IN PANAMA HAS BEEN USED AS A FRONT TO SELL NARCOTICS TO AMERICAN SOLDIERS IN THE CANAL ZONE.

FEDERAL INVESTIGATORS ARE TRYING TO DETERMINE IF THE INFORMANT IS ENTIRELY CREDIBLE. THEY SAY HE APPEARED COOL AND PROFESSIONAL AND THAT 90 PERCENT OF HIS INFORMATION APPEARS ACCURATE.

FOOTNOTE: THE STATE DEPARTMENT VEHEMENTLY DENIES IT HAS IGNORED ANY EVIDENCE OF DRUG SMUGGLING. FEDERAL NARCOTIC OFFICIALS TOLD US THEY HAVE FOUND ABSOLUTELY NO EVIDENCE OF DRUGS BEING SMUGGLED INTO THE UNITED STATES THROUGH CUBA. ATTEMPTS ARE BEING MADE TO HAVE THE PANAMANIAN INFORMANT, WHO MUST REMAIN ANONYMOUS FOR HIS OWN SAFETY, REPEAT HIS ALLEGATIONS IN SECRET TESTIMONY ON CAPITOL HILL. END QUOTE.

3. GUIDANCE PREPARED FOR NOON BRIEFING, ON "IF ASKED" BASIS IS AS FOLLOWS:

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENT ON THE VARIOUS ALLEGATIONS OF DRUG SMUGGLING OUT OF PANAMA THAT APPEARED IN JACK ANDERSON'S COLUMN THIS MORNING? A. YES. WE EMPHATICALLY DENY THE ALLEGATION THAT THE DEPARTMENT HAS "LOOKED THE OTHER WAY" ON NARCOTICS PROBLEMS IN PANAMA. NARCOTICS CONTROL IS A HIGH PRIORITY PROGRAM AND IS TREATED THAT WAY AND THAT APPLIES SPECIFICALLY TO PANAMA AS WELL AS ALL OTHER COUNTRIES IN WHICH WE HAVE NARCOTICS PROGRAMS. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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Q. BUT WHAT ABOUT THE SPECIFIC ALLEGATIONS REGARDING NARCOTICS TRAFFIC OUT OF PANAMA INTO THE UNITED STATES? A. WITH RESPECT TO THE STATEMENT ABOUT MOISES TORRIJOS, WHATEVER INFORMATION OR ALLEGATIONS THAT MAY EXIST ARE IN THE HANDS OF THE APPROPRIATE LEGAL AUTHORITIES, SO WE WILL NOT COMMENT FURTHER ON THAT.

WITH RESPECT TO THE OTHER ALLEGATIONS IN THE ANDERSON COLUMN, WE HAVE SEEN ABSOLUTELY NO EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THEM. WE KNOW NOTHING ABOUT THE "SHADOWY UNDERWORLD INFORMANT". IF JACK ANDERSON OR ANYONE ELSE HAS INFORMATION ON THOSE ALLEGATIONS THEY HAVEN'T PRESENTED IT TO US, SO WE HAVE NO REASON TO BELIEVE THOSE ALLEGATIONS ARE TRUE.

4. WILL ADVISE IF ANY QUESTIONS ARE ASKED AT NOON BRIEFING.

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Message Attributes

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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 02-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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Disposition History: n/a
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